

had a tragic situation when it comes to their relationship with tobacco. The statistics are pretty astounding. And that is why when we do these tobacco settlements, one of the conditions that should be in there and one of the ways settlement monies can be used is to try to do everything we can to educate people about quitting, offering them cessation courses, doing counter advertising.

One of the States that has done an incredible job is the State of California, which has put a tax on cigarettes and then taken that money and advertised and showed everybody that is out there the danger of tobacco, and they in particular target their advertising to young people and say this is going to be your future. They show them lungs that have been damaged. They show older individuals that have wrinkles all over their faces because of premature aging from smoking and try to let them know what kind of damage this is going to do. So it is important that we protect everybody, protect women, and that we come up with a variety of programs with these settlement monies to try to do that.

The gentleman's comments on Attorney General Ashcroft, I think, are crucial. And over and over again we see the statements he made as a United States Senator before he got to be Attorney General. Listen to his statement on FDA authority over the tobacco industry. This was from a letter dated June 7, 2000. "I believe that the most effective way to combat nicotine addiction by people of all ages is not to allow the FDA to regulate the tobacco industry."

Well, that is just the opposite of what we ought to be doing. President Clinton used FDA authority to get out there, to regulate, to say that you cannot target young people in this country, and the courts threw it out. So now we are in a situation where the FDA has no regulatory authority. I have authored a bill in the Congress that gives regulatory authority to the FDA. We have a number of sponsors on that, and I think that is a good solid piece of legislation.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. If the gentleman will continue to yield.

Did now Attorney General Ashcroft, but then Senator Ashcroft, propose a different system or did he just suggest we throw open the gates and everybody have at it? I cannot imagine where we would be if we had that kind of system up until this point, when after many years we have been able to gather information and data that suggested the addictive qualities and the detrimental qualities of nicotine and other substances.

It strikes me that this is a very illustrative comment, also one that causes me great concern.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. The gentleman's comment is correct, and when Senator Ashcroft made that statement he was specifically targeting FDA regulation. And really what he was say-

ing, he was taking a very libertarian approach; just let anybody do whatever they want and let the private sector work. Let the tobacco companies get out there and advertise all they want and get our young people addicted. And he is saying the government should play no role. That, I think, is an irresponsible position.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. If the gentleman will further yield, the Attorney General is welcome to his own opinions. That is what makes this country so great, the first amendment and all the other traditions we have in our law and in our culture that encourages people to speak out on their point of view. But I would suggest that that particular set of sentiments is not held by the American people; that we have decided as a country that tobacco should be regulated, just like we regulate alcohol and other controlled substances.

That again points out the need to create an unbiased and bipartisan group who would oversee the Federal Government's activities in regards to this lawsuit. And this is not, incidentally, about Democrats or Republicans. There are people who have contracted these diseases and these problems in the 400,000 people the gentleman mentioned who are Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians, Green Party. I am sure there are even some anarchists in this group of people. This is not about partisan advantage, but this is about doing the right thing and representing or reflecting where the American people reside I think on this issue, which is that there is more to be done.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. The gentleman is absolutely correct, and I cannot emphasize enough that the lawsuits that were brought by State attorneys general were brought by Democrats and Republicans. As the gentleman knows, in his home State of Colorado, Attorney General Gale Norton, who is now Secretary of the Interior, she brought a lawsuit in the State of Colorado against the tobacco companies. She was part of the master settlement. She, like everyone else, was very concerned about the situation with women, the targeting of young people and trying to addict them over a lifetime. So she was out there as a Republican, very active, and there were many other Republican attorneys general around the country that were involved. So this was a bipartisan effort.

Back to this issue of Attorney General Ashcroft being in charge of this lawsuit. I cannot, with all this evidence we have laid out there, I cannot think of a worse individual to be in charge of the Nation's lawsuit against the tobacco companies. It is really like putting the fox in charge of the hen house. This gentleman has condemned these lawsuits. He fought the tobacco settlement. He was the only one in the committee. The vote in the committee was 19 to 1. He was the one in the committee. And now we have him as Attorney General and he is the head litigator.

One of the first things he did was to announce, well, I think we have a weak lawsuit; we better settle. That is no way to go into a lawsuit. It is no way to go into settlement negotiations. You have to get in there and be tough with these companies, as the State attorneys general were. He seems to be folding his tent before he has even started.

So this raises the whole question of conflict of interest, it raises the question of an appearance problem, and it raises the whole issue of bias. And I think one of the individuals that said it the best was the person that wrote the editorial for The New York Times just a couple of weeks ago when they said "The Bush administration has shown a troubling propensity for putting the interests of industrial campaign backers before its duty to protect public health. The latest case in point is the Justice Department's curious announcement that it will attempt to settle the huge tobacco lawsuit against the tobacco industry brought by the Clinton administration 2 years ago, explaining in part that it thinks the case is weak. Attorney General John Ashcroft, a major opponent of the lawsuit when he was in the Senate, included no funding for the suit in his budget. So in that sense this week's action is no surprise. Mr. Bush's spokesman explains that the President thinks society is 'too litigious,' and that it is preferable to 'reach agreements,' but abandoning the case is not the way to preserve leverage."

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. If the gentleman will yield, that is so true. And in any contest you do not tell the other team before you take the field or take the court or arrive at the golf course that you have a weakened game that day and your team is not really prepared to compete. And that is what lawsuits are. They are often the last resort option that you have; but in many cases in our society, the judicial system has proven to be an important place to play out further the debate that is necessary in our society.

I was interested to also hear the comments about the Attorney General saying there was not enough money to pursue the case. Well, the number I have heard is about \$23 million. That is real money. But when we look at the cost of the lives and the cost that we have incurred societally in Medicare and Medicaid and all of our private health systems, that is a small amount of money to invest in doing right in all the areas the gentleman has suggested.

I also find it interesting that perhaps it was suggested that there was not any money available to pursue these lawsuits. But the Attorney General himself is in charge of putting together his budget. So it is a bit like saying I do not have any money, even though I am in charge of how the money is allocated. How you spend money gives a sense of your priorities. This clearly is not a priority for the Attorney General and potentially, by extension, the President.